
 THE CITY OF NORFOLK POLICE DEPARTMENT		Operational General Order – 620: Line of Duty Deaths	
		Office of Preparation: Office of Support Services (mar)	
		CALEA: 22.1.5	
LEGAL REVIEW DATE:	September 10, 2018	PRESCRIBED DATE:	10-01-18
City Attorney:	Heather A. Muller	City Manager/Director of Public Safety:	James Keith Smith
APPROVED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:			

Purpose:

The purpose of this general order is to prepare the Norfolk Police Department for an active duty officer's death in the line of duty and to direct members of the department in providing appropriate support for the deceased officer's family. (CALEA 22.1.5)

Policy:

It is the policy of the Norfolk Police Department to offer liaison assistance to the immediate family of an active duty officer who dies or becomes disabled in the line of duty, and to offer tangible and emotional support during this traumatic period of adjustment for the surviving family.

Supersedes:

1. G.O. OPR-620: Line of Duty Deaths, dated December 2, 2009
2. Any previously issued directive conflicting with this order

Order Contents

- I. Procedures
- II. Appointment of Departmental Coordinators

I. Procedures

A. Death Notification

The following procedures will be adhered to in cases of line of duty deaths and in cases of critically injured officers with a “poor” prognosis of survival. **These procedures will be followed whenever possible with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the department.** Personnel providing services and assistance to family members and survivors will accommodate their needs, wishes, and desires, **but only to the extent that the department may legally comply.**

1. The name of the deceased officer will not be released to the media or other parties before immediate survivors living in the area are notified.
2. The victim’s commanding officer or the field commander will either designate an officer (lieutenant or above) to inform the immediate family of the officer’s condition/death or make the notification in person. If neither the commanding officer nor the field commander is immediately available, this responsibility will fall to the senior officer on duty.
3. Notification of the immediate family will be made as soon as possible.
4. Notification of survivors in the immediate area will be made in person and, whenever appropriate, with another person such as a police chaplain. Whenever the health of immediate survivors is a concern, emergency medical services personnel will be requested to stand by. Telephone notification will be utilized only when all other methods are not feasible and only when approved by the Chief of Police or designee.
5. If the opportunity to transport the immediate family to the hospital exists prior to the officer’s death, immediate transportation should be provided rather than waiting for any other members of the departmental delegation to arrive. The officers assigned to the notification of survivors will inform the Hospital Liaison Officer, identified in Section I. B., that the family is on the way. In such cases, if the officer has died, notification will be made to the survivors in a forthright and empathetic manner.
6. Communication of information concerning the officer and the incident will, whenever possible, be restricted to the telephone to avoid interception by the media or others. Should the media obtain the officer’s name prematurely, the ranking officer should request that the information be withheld until proper notification of survivors can be made.
7. The notification officer, identified in Section II.A., will be responsible for identification of additional survivors outside the area and will make any notifications as desired by the immediate family. Such notifications will be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made.
8. The notification officer will submit a written report to the Chief of Police specifying the identity, time and place of survivors notified.

B. Assisting Survivors at the Hospital

The highest ranking officer to arrive at the hospital will serve as or designate a Hospital Liaison Officer, who will be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, departmental personnel, the media and others, and assume the following responsibilities:

1. Arrange for both a waiting facility for immediate survivors and a press staging area, if required. The desires of the surviving family members will be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends.
2. Ensure that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the officer's condition to the family before releasing information to any other parties.
3. Assist family members; in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer.
4. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services.
5. Ensure that immediate family members are provided with appropriate assistance at the hospital.
6. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.

II. Appointment of Departmental Coordinators

The designated departmental coordinators are: the Liaison/Benefits Coordinator, Funeral Liaison Officer and Family Support Advocate. The positions of Funeral Liaison Officer and Family Support Advocate will be identified in writing to departmental personnel at the appropriate time, and the surviving family members will be informed of those individuals so designated.

A. Liaison/Benefits Coordinator

The commanding officer of the Office of Support Services is the departmental Liaison/Benefits Coordinator and will serve as a facilitator between the family and the police department. He or she will work closely with the Funeral Liaison Officer, Family Support Advocate and the commanding officer of the deceased officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Ensuring access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist surviving members, emphasizing the family's prerogative for access to psychological services.
2. Ensuring police personnel are provided the opportunity to participate in critical incident stress debriefings.
3. Providing oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members in conjunction with the Funeral Liaison Officer.

4. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements to include the honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
5. Arranging for the name of an officer killed in the line of duty to be placed on the memorial plaque and bell.
6. Expediting any honors due to the employee.
7. Obtaining the employee's service record for obituary purposes.
8. Assisting family members in dealing with general media inquiries and informing them of limitations on what can be released to the media.
9. Providing liaison with the media to include coordination of any statements and press conferences. The Public Information Office will ensure that police department members are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.
10. Ensuring that security checks of the survivor's residence are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.
11. Filing Workers' Compensation claims and related paperwork.
12. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.
13. Advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.
14. Providing guidance/support to family members of disabled or deceased officers applying for LODA benefits pursuant to the Code of Virginia.

B. Funeral Liaison Officer

The Funeral Liaison Officer acts as facilitator between the decedent officer's family and the department during the wake (if held) and funeral. This officer will be appointed by the commanding officer of the victim. The Funeral Liaison Officer is responsible for:

1. Meeting with family members and explaining the liaison's responsibilities.
2. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the funeral services and burial.
3. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
4. Relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent officer's death and appropriate information regarding any investigations.

5. Determining the need for travel arrangements for out-of-town family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral and reporting this information to the Liaison/Benefits Coordinator.
6. Briefing the family members on procedures involved in a law enforcement funeral.
7. Collecting and vouchering the employee's personal property and delivering it to the survivors.

C. Family Support Advocate

The Family Support Advocate serves in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. This individual will be appointed by the commanding officer of the deceased. The duties of the Family Support Advocate include:

1. Providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member (if applicable).
2. Accompanying surviving family members to any criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required.
3. Identifying all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services required.
4. Maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support, and maintaining an ongoing relationship between the department and the immediate family.
5. Relaying the concerns and needs of the family to those individuals or organizations that may provide assistance, and encouraging others to visit and help as necessary.
6. Relaying any family concerns to the Chief of Police or designee.
7. Collecting and preparing an inventory of the employee's issued City equipment and returning it to the Property and Evidence Unit.

Definitions:

Line of Duty Death: The death of an active duty officer by felonious or accidental means during the course of performing police functions while on or off duty.

Survivors: Immediate family members of the deceased officer to include a spouse, children, parents, and siblings.

Related Documents:

1. G.O. ADM-468: Chaplain Program
2. G.O. OPR-410: Deadly Force Incidents

Attachment:

Virginia Retirement System LODA (Line of Duty Act) Guidelines

Virginia Retirement System LODA Guidelines

The Virginia Retirement System provides guidelines for Line of Duty Act (LODA) benefits via the following website: www.valoda.org